LANG ZHAN «水文的讀法» (Shuǐ Wén de Dú Fǎ)

THE TIDE WITCH'S MANUAL OF WAVE SCRIPT DIVINATION

ZJC (2026)

Prologue: The Sea’s First Lesson

The sea does not keep its silence out of malice. It speaks endlessly—in a language older than any human word, written in a cursive of salt, foam and light. This language, *Lang Zhan*, is not a code to be cracked but a literacy to be earned. The waves are the Mother’s breath; to read them is to feel her pulse.

This manual is for those who are called to that literacy. It is not a museum piece, but a living transmission, adapted from the fragmentary texts of the *Chao Wu Lu*, the lore of the Fujianese Tide Witches and the cosmology of the *Salt-Water Yi*. It begins with the first and most profound step: ***go to the sea***. Stand barefoot where the water meets the land. Tell her your name. She has been waiting to hear it.

The art of *Lang Zhan* does not offer the comfort of fixed meanings. It offers a relationship with a vast, intelligent and utterly indifferent presence that reflects your own soul back to you with terrifying clarity. The future is the least interesting thing about the sea. The depths are what matter.

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PART ONE: THE GRAMMAR OF WATER

Before you can read a text, you must understand its alphabet. The sea’s alphabet is not composed of letters but of the Eight Primal Patterns (Bā Làng Tú), the fundamental brushstrokes of the Mother’s calligraphy. These patterns are best read at dawn, when the boundary between darkness and light, yin and yang, is at its thinnest and the water's truth is most visible.

THE EIGHT PRIMAL PATTERNS

A practitioner must learn to feel these patterns, not just see them. The wave that *"looks"* like a Dragon's Rib must also feel like safety in the gut. The wave that forms Ghost Teeth must send a chill of warning up the spine.

1. Dragon's Ribs (龍骨浪, Lóng Gǔ Làng)

•**Visual:** Parallel, evenly spaced swells, moving in a single, unified direction. The sea breathes in an orderly rhythm.

•**Meaning:** Alignment. Safety. Favorable conditions. The cosmic breath is in order. A voyage or undertaking will proceed as planned. The current is with you.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"The day belongs to you. Sail now."*

•**Caution:** If seen at noon, it signals an unnatural calm before a great shift. Investigate the stillness.

2. Ghost Teeth (鬼牙浪, Guǐ Yá Làng)

•**Visual:** Jagged, chaotic wavelets that overlap and break against each other, creating sharp, irregular peaks like a serrated blade.

•**Meaning:** Betrayal. Hidden danger. Divided intentions. The surface is a lie. A trusted ally may fail you, or a seemingly sound plan hides a fatal flaw.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"Look to your left hand. The sea sees what you refuse to see."*

•**Navigator's Note:** Look not for an enemy fleet, but for the silence in your own crew.

3. Silk Unfurling (展絲浪, Zhǎn Sī Làng)

•**Visual:** Long, smooth, rolling swells that stretch for miles without breaking. The water's surface is like liquid glass, taut and serene.

•**Meaning:** A rare and powerful omen of hidden treasure or an unexpected, profound opportunity approaching from a great distance. It is the sea’s gift.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"The gift is already on its way. Be ready to receive what you did not earn."*

•**A Tide Witch’s Saying:** *"If you see it once in a season, you are fortunate. If you see it once in a year, you are still fortunate."*

4. The White Serpent (白蛇浪, Bái Shé Làng)

•**Visual:** A single, undulating line of thick white foam stretching laterally across multiple wave fronts, like a serpent moving through the water.

•**Meaning:** Transformation. A significant, life-altering change is approaching, representing the end of one phase and the difficult, often painful, beginning of another. It is not inherently good or bad, only inevitable.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"Read the direction. The serpent points its head toward the source of the change: seaward for the external world, landward for the struggle within."*

5. The Shattered Mirror (破鏡浪, Pò Jìng Làng)

•**Visual:** A wave that rises and then collapses suddenly and inwards upon itself, producing a circular, non-resolving ripple that distorts all reflections.

•**Meaning:** Illusion. Deception. Self-delusion. You are seeing what you desperately wish to see, not the truth. This pattern often appears when a woman asks about a man she knows she should leave.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"The sea cannot make you leave. She can only show you the broken glass. Whether you cut yourself on it is your choice."*

6. The Dragon's Gate (龍門浪, Lóng Mén Làng)

•**Visual:** Two large, powerful waves rising simultaneously on the left and right, leaving a distinct, narrow channel of impossibly still water between them.

•**Meaning:** A test. A threshold. The mythic waterfall where a carp must leap to become a dragon. A challenge that cannot be avoided or circumvented; it must be faced and passed through to achieve the next stage of being.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"The gate is open. Leap, or turn back. There is no other path."*

7. The Drowned Hand (溺手浪, Nì Shǒu Làng)

•**Visual:** A single wave that rises anomalously higher than all others, crests and is then abruptly and violently pulled down from below, as if seized by a hand from the deep, before it can break.

•**Meaning:** Direct intervention from the spirit world. A ghost, an ancestor, or a cthonic force is reaching into your reality. You are not alone.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"You will know if this is a helping hand or a dragging claw by the temperature of your blood. A dead ally reaches up with warmth. A dead enemy pulls you down with cold."*

8. The Silent Tide (默潮浪, Mò Cháo Làng)

•**Visual:** Waves that move with visible force but produce no sound whatsoever—an unnatural, absolute silence. It is not a suppression of noise, but an absence of it.

•**Meaning:** The rarest and most dangerous pattern. An unrecognizable presence has entered your waters—a land-spirit, a powerful sorcerer working against you, or a thing with no name. The sea itself is holding its breath in warning.

•**The Whisper of the Sea:** *"The sea is silent because she is terrified. You should be, too."*

•**The Tide Witch's Response:** Immediate and absolute protective action. Deploy the Three Concealments—the Stealth Talisman, the Muffling Oar and the Sailor's Shadow Ward—at once, without delay.

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PART TWO: THE DEEPER ARTS OF READING

Mastering the eight patterns is the first step. To become a true Wave Calligrapher, one must learn to read the sea’s subtler texts, written in foam, salt and the behavior of her creatures.

1. The Practice of *Lang Zhan* (A Foundational Ritual)

•**Timing:** Dawn or dusk. Noon is discouraged, as the sun flattens the water and makes the sea's *"handwriting"* illegible. Midnight is for urgent questions only.

•**Position:** Barefoot at the tide line, where the highest wave of the last tide touched.

•**The Question:** Frame your question silently and clearly. Ask one thing. The sea answers one thing.

•**The Observation:** Watch the waves for the space of one hundred slow breaths. Do not stare, but hold a soft focus, *"as you would gaze at the face of a lover, not as you would stare at a chart."*

•**The Interpretation:** After the hundred breaths, close your eyes. The first pattern you recall is the primary answer. The sea shows many things; the thing you remember without trying is the thing she wants you to know.

•**The Recording:** Keep a Wave Journal. Write down the pattern, the date, the tidal state, the lunar phase and the question. The sea’s answers are precise, but your memory is not.

2. The Method of the Conch-Shell

For this, you require a spiral-cut conch shell large enough to hold your whispered intent. Wade into the shallows at dawn or dusk. Cup the shell in your hands and breathe your specific question into its opening as a soft whisper that fogs the inner pearl. Submerge the shell and release it to the sea. Then, stand and watch the waves for one hundred breaths. The first pattern to arise is a direct response from the Ocean Mother, a perception born of the sea's own script.

3. Foam Necromancy (Pào Hún Fǎ)

This art is for communicating with the drowned. Collect nine handfuls of the purest white foam from the crest of a just-breaking wave. Spread it on a square of black silk. Let it settle. If the foam contracts into a single, dense central cluster, the dead approve of your question and are present to help you. If it scatters loosely across the silk, their answer is a foretelling of disaster—a shipwreck in your affairs.

4. Salt-Crack Divination (Yán Liè Zhān)

For this fiery art, scrape the salt crusts formed on a ship’s deck or a rock saturated by sea-spray. Build a small, hot fire. Throw the salt into the flames and watch how the crystals crack. Cracks that fork like lightning bolts reveal the active wrath of the Dragon King—a celestial warning against your current course. Cracks that split into interwoven, net-like shapes warn of a rival's trap—a net closing around you, laid by human hands.

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PART THREE: THE LOST ART OF THE WAVE CALLIGRAPHERS (LANG SHUFA)

Literacy, for a master, becomes authorship. A fragment from Folio 51 of the *Chao Wu Lu* hints at a lost tradition, the *Lang Shufa*, the living art from which *Lang Zhan* derived. A woman on Penghu could speak to her sister on the Fujian coast by beating the water's surface with the flat of an oar: three strikes, a pause, two strikes. The message would arrive at her feet over a hundred miles away. This art required a lifetime of practice and a bond between the two practitioners that was closer than blood. The text cannot teach this lost art. But it can teach you the first, foundational exercise for a new lineage of Water-Speakers.

A Beginner's Exercise in Wave-Calling

Seek out a still, sheltered body of salt water: a tide pool or a quiet cove. Sit beside it and let your breathing slow until it feels like the rhythm of the gentle waves. Drop a single, small, smooth stone into the center of the pool. Watch as the concentric ripples spread outward—this is your voice, initiated by a single act. Now, recite a single word imbued with strong feeling—a name, a question, a line of verse—silently in your mind. Drop the stone again. Did the ripples change? Practice this daily for one turning of the moon. Record your findings. The sea, as the Compiler noted, is large enough to carry voices. She is old enough to remember how. She is only waiting for someone to learn.

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